

# INDIGENOUS VALUES FOR SUSTAINABLE NATION

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## Abstract

This paper introduces the Philippine Indigenous Psychology or “Sikolohiyang Pilipino”, in connection with concepts of the Philippine Personality model “Pagkataong Filipino” by Dr. Virgilio Enriquez. Sikolohiyang Pilipino has become an academic discipline reflecting Asian social realities in the field of psychology. It is a psychology of, for, and about the Philippine people. It is also a step towards a “world psychology” – what psychology could become after transcending the limiting constructs of Western academic frameworks (which marginalize indigenous psychologies). Sikolohiyang Pilipino links modern social science to the cultural heritage of the Philippine people and their (once) ecology-friendly Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices. The core concept of this system is “kapwa”—“the including self” (in contrast to the “excluding self” of individualistic cultures). Equivalent terms have been identified among other ancestral cultures and indigenous peoples around the world.

## INTRODUCTION

Sikolohiyang Filipino is the first indigenous psychology taught at a university. In the early 1980’s, it was established as a university program at the University of the Philippines. This was a major advance in the critique of the Anglo-American dominance in the international academe. Its teaching materials are based on the common experience (history, language, arts, spirituality, etc.) of the peoples of Malay-Polynesian heritage (and of First Nations in the USA). The discipline affirmed the native his-

tory, values and characteristics of a region, and developed theories, concepts and methods with the local culture as source. The emerging culture-fair models were tried, tested and compared with standard theories/methods in psychology.

Psychology, as represented by Sikolohiyang Filipino, is a multifaceted human science. It accommodates findings from the academic-scientific psychologies of industrialized nations and the clerical psychology of academic-philosophical schools. It expands this scope by including ethnic psychology and oral traditions (i.e. the ancestral psycho-medical systems that are rooted in spiritual experience). Sikolohiyang Filipino proponents consider art (traditional and contemporary) and the findings from the fields of humanities, history, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, etc., as sources for psychological knowledge. In short, they declare both the scientific and the humanistic approaches in psychology, as valid. Sikolohiyang Filipino aims to balance the present dependence in the Philippines on U.S.-centric educational models and establish a truly universal psychology in the service of all mankind.

## **BACKGROUND: COLONIALIZATION DISRUPTS SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL EQUILIBRIUM IN THE PHILIPPINES**

*“The moment we began to view ourselves through Western eyes, what we held sacred suddenly became worthless, our virtues turned into vices, our strengths turned into weaknesses, and our triumphs into failures. We could no longer be proud of anything truly our own and began to regard anything native as primitive and undeveloped. Anything indigenous became a source of embarrassment and uneasiness”.* (Felipe de Leon Jr., President Akademiya ng Sikolohiyang Filipino, 2004)

The Filipino people, since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, have been the unwilling recipients of invading cultures, religions, education, and value systems from Europe and the Americas. Until today, Western educational models reflecting the US colonial policy of “benevolent assimilation” (pro-

moted through free public schooling) still dominate the horizon of Philippine public education, from elementary to university levels. The strong influence of Spanish Catholicism is also still pervasive in Philippine politics and social relations. In contrast, the ecology-friendly Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSP) of pre-colonial Filipinos are marginalized (in schools and media) and even suppressed.

Where ancestral Knowledge System and Practices once taught communities that nature was a *partner in co-existence*, the avaricious Western schemes encourage the *exploitation of natural resources*. The continuing “mis-education” of Filipinos with such imported discourse has dire consequences: In the wake of a continued exodus of educated Filipinos for job placements abroad, an increasing mass of illiterate, unskilled, and often landless rural folks has turned to ravaging the environment. Their desperate efforts to assuage poverty and own a slice of progress spell a road map to an ecological disaster, where the harmony between man and the environment is spiraling out of balance.

## **IKSP EQUAL ECO-BALANCE: A NEED FOR RECOVERY**

Recently, the growing consequences of global warming have pressured soul-searching scientists to point to the shortcomings of western environmental knowledge – especially concerning global biodiversity. The link between indigenous knowledge and the conservation of biodiversity has been established (Regpala, 2010). Where Academic Knowledge (AK) in economics teaches how to maximize profit, Indigenous Knowledge (IK) invokes a sustainable *law of supply and demand*: “Hunt only what you can eat. Harvest only what you can consume. Leave some fruits on the tree for others”. Lately, lawmakers and international ecology agencies, seek to include the Indigenous Peoples (IP) sector in drawing up global environmental policies– to ease the consequences of our extractive/ destructive modern culture.

One example for ancestral expertise regarding the ecosystem is the “Pinugo” or the ancient watershed systems that sustain the rice terraces of the Ifugao people, who inhabit the Cordillera mountain ranges in northern Philippines. Such time-tested eco-wisdom about water cycles,

irrigation, and forest management is said to date back almost 3 millennia and was retained by rice-cycle rituals for many centuries. UNESCO has cited the Ifugao rice terraces as tangible living-culture heritage and a tribute to indigenous knowledge.

However, due to the modernization of their lifestyles, ancestral communities in the Cordilleras today have ceased to be the stewards of their natural resources. Excessive logging in the once sacred communal “Pinugo” watersheds— for woodcarving exports and commercial vegetable gardens — has caused the springs to dry up. Soil erosion alters the ingenious irrigation that originated in the dawn of time. The Ifugao rice terraces are endangered. So are the ancestral ways of the Ifugao people.

The imposition of Western values in the Philippines— through missionary schools— has damaged ancestral communal self-restraint. This is happening around the world. What Western economic models fail to factor into their efficiency-oriented models and theories is that *the world is a holistic system*. Man and nature operate interdependently. This systemic view is one of the most important features of the ancestral IKSP.

The holistic orientation is implicit in the traditional Filipino value system of “Pagkataong Filipino”. Here, the core value “kapwa” (the “shared self”) stands for the including of others (people, spirits, even animals, plants, rocks, bodies of water, etc.) in the concept of Self. Filipino personality, then, is a psychological framework that extends the animistic worldview of the hunter-gatherer societies, among whom respect for the environment is the norm. Such a mind-set seeks equilibrium— i.e. fairness in the social order, pooling resources and strengths in communities, a balanced co-existence of man with nature, and so on. Education based on such principles could make a whole lot of difference in modernizing nations like the Philippines and other developing countries. And it can address the problems of global warming as well.

## **INDIGENOUS FILIPINO PSYCHOLOGY AS AN ACADEMIC EFFORT IN REDEEMING IK**

The late Filipino psychologist Dr. Virgilio Enriquez pioneered in recognizing the importance of the indigenous social values for contem-

porary society. In the '70s, he was among a group of social scientists that roused academia in Asia to look for a more appropriate social science that was free from Western representations. He used findings from anthropology about Filipino IKSP and other Asian cultural traditions as the basis for the values of his novel “person-hood” (*pagka-tao*) model in psychology. His theory centered on “kapwa”—the “shared self”. Support from the Japanese academe helped him to publish his theory in 1989.

Enriquez and his peers (among them Zeus Salazar, Prospero Covar, the late National Scientist Alfredo Lagmay and others) founded “Sikolohiyang Pilipino” or “Filipino Indigenous Psychology” in the early '80s, asserting Kapwa Psychology as an academic discipline. In the '90s, the group established a graduate program at the Psychology Department of the University of the Philippines. Psychological research then included pre-colonial worldviews too, in order to re-discover ways that could strengthen the contemporary Filipino society.

## **THE PHILIPPINE PERSONALITY THEORY: “PAGKATAONG PILIPINO” (FILIPINO PERSONHOOD)**

The Filipino “Personhood” model of Enriquez is a central paradigm within Sikolohiyang Pilipino. Many, who examined it, are inspired by the insightful foresight of the US-trained Filipino psychologist—to create a personality model from the common, local concepts of his country (Mendoza 2008, Strobel 1996, 2012, de Castro 2012). Others criticize the model as an unfounded construct, unsupported by empirical and experimental data (St. Maria, 1993). Academic efforts to verify Enriquez’ theory continue (Yacat & Clemente 2009, Conaco 2012).

The author is the first PhD graduate in Sikolohiyang Pilipino from the Psychology Department of the University of the Philippines. Although German born, I had lived over three decades in Philippines. My research on the worldviews and lifestyles of Filipino artist culture-bearers was published and continued to propagate the “Pagkataong Pilipino” theory of her mentor Virgilio Enriquez. The book catalyzed several university conferences (in both the Philippines and the USA) that examined the importance of values such as “kapwa” for the globalizing society. From my

own precarious position- trying to make sense of my host country as an outsider, by looking at everything Filipino with German cultural filters – the personhood paradigm helped me to understand my host culture better.

For lack of space, my discussion of Enriquez’ “Value System of the Philippine Personality” omits some constructs, namely the three *Colonial / Accommodative Surface Values* and the three *Associated Behavioral Patterns*. In this primer on the Philippine Personality (Pagkataong Filipino) the **three Core-Values** of the theory are explained, together with **two more concepts**.

### The Concepts of the Philippine Personality Structure.

CONFRONTATIVE SURFACE VALUES	<b>BAHALA NA</b> (determination)	LAKAS NG LOOB (guts)	PAKIKIBAKA (resistance)
PIVOTAL INTERPERSONAL VALUE	<b>PAKIRAMDAM</b> {Pakipag-kapwa tao} (shared identity) <b>KAPWA</b> (shared identity)		
CORE VALUE	<b>KAGANDAHANG-LOOB</b> {Pagkamakatao} (shared humanity)		
LINKING SOCIO PERSONAL VALUE			
ASSOCIATED SOCIETAL VALUES	KARANGALAN (dignity)	KATARUNGAN (justice)	<b>KALAYAAN</b> (freedom)

### The Three Core Values of Pagkataong Filipino:

#### 1) KAPWA or Pakiki-Pag-Kapwa (Shared Identity)

The core value of the Philippine personality is “*kapwa*”. This notion of a “*shared self*” extends the “I” to include the “Other”. It bridges the deepest recess of a person with anyone outside him or herself– even total strangers. “People are just people in spite of their age, clothes, diplomas, color or affiliations”, said one Filipino artist (de Guia 2006).

“Kapwa” is the “unity of the *one-of-us-and-the-other*”, according to Enriquez, who introduced his construct as a prime value in Filipino social interaction. *Kapwa* implies moral and normative aspects that oblige a person to treat one another as fellow human beings and therefore as co-

equal, said the scholar. But he also foresaw that this value was threatened by the spreading Western influences, when he wrote: “...once AKO (*the ‘I’*) starts thinking of himself as separate from KAPWA, the Filipino ‘self’ gets to be individuated as in the Western sense and, in effect, denies the status of KAPWA to the other”. (Enriquez ’89)

Today, most Filipinos hearing the word “kapwa” think of their neighbors or their immediate circle of friends. But standard Tagalog dictionaries (Vito Santos, 1986) pronounce “kapwa” as “fellow being” and “the other person”. Older, Spanish dictionaries translate “kapuwa” as “both” and “the one and the other”, or “others”.

From all these, Enriquez concluded that the original Filipino idea of “others” was inclusive. He wrote: “*The English “others” is actually used in opposition to the “self”, and implies the recognition of the self as a separate entity. In contrast, kapwa is a recognition of a shared identity, an inner self shared with others*”. He also said: “*A person starts having kapwa not so much because of a recognition of status given him by others but more so because of his awareness of shared identity. The ako (ego) and the iba-sa-akin (others) are one and the same in kapwa psychology*”. (Enriquez, ’92)

This inclusiveness in the Philippine language, of *the Self and others*, is unique – and different from the language of modern, individualistic societies, asserts Enriquez. For him, such inclusiveness implies the moral obligation to treat one another as equal fellow human beings. People, who practice kapwa in their lives, display a genuine, people-centered orientation. They share their surplus and go out of their way to lend others a hand. Their commitment to their community is palpable. They are good leaders, quick to volunteer, willing to share their resources, skills and knowledge freely (i.e. by teaching children, facilitating municipal workshops, or working with the poor, etc.). Usually, their help comes with big smile.

Community building is second nature to a people of such a bearing. *Kapwa* inspires them to facilitate at meetings and participate in civic affairs. How powerful this Filipino core concept is and what it can facilitate on a global scale can be seen in the Philippine 1986 People Power movement that unseated a corrupt dictator; as well as in the Filipino-Spanish war and the Philippine-American Wars, which the people won against all odds (like in Vietnam).



*Kapwa*-inspired leaders are able to motivate others by living their ideals, rather than imposing their will. In our globalizing age, where it is essential to network, to mobilize masses, build consent and spread ideas, the *kapwa* orientation might be quite helpful to do that.

## 2) PAKI-RAMDAM (Knowing Through Feeling)

As the heart is central to the body, the shared Self nurtures the Philippine personality (Filipino personhood). But “*kapwa*” does not reside alone at the core. It manifests in “*paki-ramdam*” – the pivotal interpersonal value that would translate into the English word “feeling”. But the scope of *paki-ramdam* embraces so much more than feeling! It matches the ocean-like expanse of *kapwa* with an equally large field of piercing awareness. In the West this is called *emotional intelligence* and a lot of coaches build their management training on this platform nowadays. Among Filipinos, this is but a built-in cultural trait. Enriquez named this emotional fineness of Filipinos “shared perception” or “shared inner perception” (Enriquez ’92).

Rita Mataragnon (in Pe-Pua ’82) describes *paki-ramdam* as an *emotional a-priori* that lies within Filipino personhood. Enriquez asserts that this all-important value operates behind and drives all other Filipino values. A steering emotion, a keen inner sense that initiates all deeds, *paki-ramdam* seems to trigger the spontaneous actions of helping and volunteering that come with sharing the Self.

According to Mataragnon’s research, most Filipinos can boast this heightened sensitivity. They are good in sensing cues, she finds. The empathic “feeling for another”; the talent of “sizing up others”; even “reading signs” (for dangers and weather); or the Filipino healer’s skill of sensing the diseases of a patient in his/her body prior to meeting the sick person – all these call for acute awareness of subtle traces, nuances and gestures. *Paki-ramdam* indicates a tacit cognitive process that assembles information from a multitude of fragments and impressions. It works well within the indigenous Filipino social reality, where emotions are participatory, open and constantly shared. Where personal privacy is neither existent nor needed. The *kapwa* disposition must have it this way, initiating constantly new interpersonal encounters through sharing space, food, ideas, beliefs, histories, opinions, gossip, joys, tears, and more.



Heightened sensitivity makes a good survival tool in a society where not all social interactions are carried out with words. It comes in handy in our globalizing world, where not everybody speaks each other's language, or, where people speak the same language but interpret words differently. *Paki-ramdam* can help a person navigate the ambiguities of daily living – knowing the right moment to join a group, when to ask questions or present one's argument, or how to blend in with other people. This sensitivity is a definite social skill, intrinsic to the Filipino personality (and likely to other Asian / indigenous peoples, too).

### **3) KAGANDAHANG-LOOB (Shared inner Nobility)**

The third core-value of the Filipino personality is “*kagandahang-loob*”—“shared inner nobility”. The dictionary renders this phrase as a very general concept that emphasizes the beauty of something. Its meaning is so broad—it stands for “anything good about something”. The term also translates into “nobility” and “generosity”.

Victor Saway is a young and powerful leader from the Talaandig tribe, who founded the first and longest existing School of Living Traditions in the Philippines. At a recent conference, he referred to the inner radiance of *kagandahang-loob*, when he shared that the students at his school could be only motivated with beauty. “Show them beauty and they will be naturally following you!” said the charismatic chief.

As a core-value, *kagandahang-loob* acts like an anchor that grounds *kapwa* and *paki-ramdam* in the enduring beliefs of Filipino Indigenous Knowledge. These are basic: God is good. Life is about learning, creating and sharing. Life is good, even if there is hardship. Every sunrise brings a new day, a new horizon. There is always hope.

*Kagandahang-loob* would guide a person towards authentic acts of goodness and generosity; towards a nurturing that has its origin in genuine empathy. An example is the story of a Filipino sailor, as told to a journalist by a tailor in Saigon, Vietnam. This seamstress, a mother of three orphans, had been widowed during the war. To make ends meet, she worked as an employee at a small tailoring shop near the harbor. She had never met the Filipino seaman before and never saw him again afterwards. He had just walked one day into the shop and ordered a suit. During a casual conversation, he learned of the widow's plight. When he

returned to pick up his suit, he handed the woman an envelope with money to buy her own sewing machine. Needing no further thanks, he headed back to the boat and sailed on.

The Philippine historian Reynaldo Ileto (*Pasyon and Revolution*, 1979) pointed out how important the strife for a noble character (*kagandahang loob*) was among the historical Filipino freedom fighters. He wrote that these “bayanis” (heroes) reminded their followers that nobility had to be re-won every day. They also taught that it was all right to be rich, as long as an equally beautiful character matched the external signs of power.

## KAPWA CONSCIOUSNESS IN A TURBULENT WORLD:

### The Relevance of Enriquez’ Core Values in a New World Order

In summary, the three core-concepts of the value-structure of the Philippine Personality Theory are *kapwa*, *paki-ramdam* and *kagandahang-loob*. Translated as *Shared Identity* (inclusiveness), *Shared Inner Perception* (a keen sensitivity, enhanced feeling) and *Shared Humanity* (nobility, generosity), these values show the humanistic inclination of the Filipino.

The Philippines today— as the rest of the world— finds itself at the threshold of a new order. Our changes in weather and denuded mountains tell important stories. But these stories are lost in the manipulated “news”, advertisements and other stories we see on TV. For global wholeness and unity, a balance must be found between the ancient organic and the modern mechanical forces of our world.

Kapwa and the core values of Filipino person-hood do advocate wholeness and balance. These values emphasize the function of *the whole + its isolated parts*. Such a worldview seems quite useful for our overcrowding planet, where we have to learn how to tolerate each other in order to survive. The *including orientation* of the Filipino person-hood, with its core values *Shared Identity*, *Shared Inner Perception*, and *Shared Humanity*—trains us how to blend and collaborate, to enhance and support one-another. It teaches people to pool their strength and achieve common goals by working together; how to share surplus instead of hoard-

ing and racketeering. On a personal level, these Filipino values make sure that the heart is also full, not just the stomach or the bank account. Could we call the latter: prophylactic mental health?

## **ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS OF ENRIQUEZ' THEORY:**

Enriquez' *Value System of Philippine Psychology* has stimulated a considerable body of research, mostly on the core value *kapwa* – *the shared Self*. (Pe-Pua, Santiago, Mataragnon, Church, Odal, de Guia, St. Maria, Strobel, de Castro, Mendoza, Perkinson, de Leon, Ajejo, Obusan, Yacat & Clemente, Conaco, Bautista, Himeda, Lee, and others). For this short introduction to Enriquez' theory, its fifteen values have been narrowed down to nine. The Colonial / Accommodative Surface Values and the Associated Behavioral Patterns have been omitted for reasons that they dwell on the re-interpretation of early research by American anthropologists visiting the Philippines. Readers interested in the entire Value System can find it in Virgilio Enriquez' book "*From Colonial to Liberation Psychology*" (1992) or in my book "*Kapwa – The Self in the Other*" (2006), both available from Anvil Publishing House, Pasig, Philippines.

The two additional values discussed in this paper are, respectively, from the categories of the Associated Societal Values and the Confrontative Surface Values.

What is a societal value? It is a conviction that is deeply rooted in the ancestral heritage of a people. Such a disposition directs the personal values of an individual in profound and unquestioned ways. "Kalayaan" a.k.a. "freedom", "liberty" and "independence" is such a societal value.

Another, all-important value describes the confrontative character of Filipinos. This construct is based on the Filipino expression "Bahala-na!" ("What come may be!") and refers to a mysterious determination that is linked to spiritual confidence- a courage generated from trust in God.

## KALAYAAN (FREEDOM, INDEPENDENCE, THINKING OUTSIDE-THE-BOX) AND THE KAPWA CULTURE

The Philippine value “kalayaan” reflects the untamed need of all living beings to be free. It is dubbed as the *sine qua non* of Filipino personhood. The importance of this societal value becomes clear when one considers the archipelagic habitat of the Filipino people, whose ancestors traversed the seas between their 7000 islands on tiny vessels since the dawn of time. Flexibility and patience are the virtues of a sailor. No one can dictate on the wind!

Ileto (1979), in his study of historical freedom fighters, examined this Filipino ideal. He noticed that Filipino children, traditionally, enjoyed great freedom while growing up. Indulged by their parents, they were allowed to learn at their own speed, experiment with life as “saling pusa” (informal group member), and slowly discover and manifest, who they really were as human beings (kapwa tao). The expected result of such liberal rearing was that children who had been indulged by the whole clan would grow up to be tolerant, emancipated and open-minded adults, indulging others. This kind of reasoning worked for countless generations of ancestral Filipino kapwa cultures (and may still work for remote indigenous communities).

However, the same assumption can also produce the opposite effect: Without the proper discipline and training in such things as respect, propriety, compassion and humility, the liberties bestowed on children can mold them into irresponsible and permissive adults, writes Ileto. The pampered child spoiled rotten! People ruled by outright selfishness were often the progenies of politicians, royalties, merchants, and other members of the privileged class, he said. Can the rigid class systems that are imposed by empires over more egalitarian oriented *kapwa* cultures be traced as the seedbeds for the rampant global corruption and greed?

Today’s individualistic city cultures hardly cultivate anymore empathy (*paki-ramdam*), or genuine kindness (*kagandahang-loob*), or sharing. Many middle-class youngsters in Philippine urban settings are reared in an atmosphere of materialistic indulgence paired with the individualistic values of ego-hood. Instead of merging with the shared Self, we bump into the Expanded Ego in our malls and streets: People walk beside each

other chatting or eyes glued to their mobile phones. Freedom now means owning an electronic device with earphones.

## **KALAYAAN MANIFESTED AS “FILIPINO TIME”**

Another aspect of *kalayaan* refers to the concept of time: A minute more, an hour less, what difference does that make for the now? Philippine Time, some say, is experiential time (Mercado, 1977; de Leon, 2008). It is “cosmic time”, not “clock-time”. Rather, it is “organic time”—cyclical, oscillating, approximating, alive! It is a “felt time” filled with memories and contemplations — not the repetitive staccato of machine time, or the sterile on/off bytes of computer time.

A researcher once asked Filipino farmers about their concept of time (Nicado Henson in Pe-Pua 82). She reported that none of those rural folks measured time by such things as a watch, even though some of them owned one. Instead, these natives measured time by the sun; by lunar and by planting cycles; by harvesting seasons; or by the time span it takes to smoke a cigarette. To the despair of some foreign investors and urban administrators, “Filipino Time” has endured in the Philippines. Where no cash exists, or where money is not valued enough, the dictum “Time is Money” does not hold.

This attitude rings from the statement of a blacksmith (a character in a film by Kidlat Tahimik). He owns not much more than his machete, a hammer and a small thatched-roof hut. He is poor, as per IMF standards. But he feels “wealthy” when he says, “*Kaya kong mamundok ng isang buwan, ... walang mawawala dito sa bahay ko -- yan ang yaman ko!*” (I can disappear in the mountains for a month... nothing in my house is worth stealing — this freedom is my wealth!)

## **BAHALA-NA! – THE TACIT TRUST THAT CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS**

The closing concept in this discussion of Enriquez’ personality theory is the confrontational value “Bahala-na!” — “determination”, “en-

durance” and “trust in God” (*Bathala*) and the God-power in man.

Whenever confronted by the unknown, or challenging / potentially dangerous situations-Filipinos take a deep breath and say “Bahala na!” before they move.

Early scholars from America framed this as a negative attitude bordering on fatalism. But the late Philippine National Scientist Alfredo Lagmay said that those visiting anthropologists had misinterpreted the way his countrymen use this Filipino expression. When those outsiders framed up “Bahala-na!” as the apathy of a happy-go-lucky people (stereotyped by colonial masters as “Juan Tamad”, the “Lazy Joe”), they were not aware of the whole story. They did not know that “Bahala-na!” had sacred undertones: Its inscription in *alibata* (a local version of the ancient syllabic writings of Asia) divides the term into “BA” (babae) for “woman” and “LA” (*lalake*) for “man” – bridged by the syllable “HA” (*hanging*), which means “breath” and “wind” and, therefore, also “spirit” or “God”. *Bahala-na!*, then, is the expression that pre-Christian Filipinos invoked when they called on their deity (*Bathala*) in times of dire need. Lagmay salvaged *Bahala-na!* from its fatalistic reputation. He transformed “Devil-May-Care!” into “determination in the face of uncertainty” – a confrontative Filipino value that stimulates resourcefulness and the creativity to survive. In Lagmay’s interpretation, *Bahala-na!* inspired action, not inaction. It was not invoked to avoid or forget problems; rather, this expression implied perseverance and hard work. As value, it instilled the courage to see oneself through hard times, said the scholar, who added: “*It drives a person on, even beyond his/her own frailties and limitations, to find a creative way out!*”

In no uncertain terms, Lagmay (a psychologist mentored by Skinner and Roger) attributed the dynamics of Filipino courage and determination to *Bahala-na!* – a value that stands for risk taking in the face of possible failure. The scholar cites this trust in God and the ultimate goodness of life as one of the reason, why so many Filipinos grab the chance to make their fortune abroad (leaving on one-way tickets, often without fixed contracts). He also saw the origin of this behavior in a social structure that challenged people to exercise their ability to cope with constant change. The Filipino flexibility expressed in *Bahala-na!*, he wrote, developed as a response to living along the earth’s “fire-belt”, an environment

that taught its inhabitants to be resourceful, adaptable and creative in order to survive.

*Bahala-na!*, then, signifies an improvisatory skill. It is a strength that helps Filipinos to access the “deep source in man”, where solutions to anything can be found. But the security offered by *Bahala-na!* would be quite different from the static security of the *sigurista* – a person who always makes sure that everything is under control, says the Harvard graduate.

Elaborating on this aspect some more, Lagmay traced the dividing line between a people who love to follow rules and others, who prefer to walk out on a limb: *“We plan everything to the minutest detail and act according to the blue-print of fixed specifications. This is what the administration wants. It is in contrast to the attitude of someone, who does not know what life will bring, one who will not try to predict the future. For such a person, the needed information will arrive at its own time and only when necessary”*, he wrote.

## **KAPWA PSYCHOLOGY AND SUSTAINABLE NATION BUILDING**

The qualities that make up the *kapwa* orientation are the shoal on which life-enhancing, culture-building attitudes grow – orientations of the kind that any leader would love to instill among his people. *Kapwa* and the Filipino person-hood could mold political advocates to be models of conduct, truly endowed to inspire others. It could mold an effective citizenry that achieved much by working together in harmony and out of free will.

There is a need for men and women who practice what they believe; for people, who manage to resist the cultural erosion that swamps the world since the large-scale adoption of wasteful consumerist lifestyles. Vital for the survival of mankind (or any culture) today are individuals, who can encourage future generations to adapt a world-view that is nurtured by both: the wisdom of the past and the vision of a global unity in the future. *Kapwa* values could also provide cultural brakes to that runaway international economy that we face with all its social, environmental and humanitarian impacts.



## CONCLUSION

We have discussed the *kapwa* orientation of Sikolohiyang Pilipino (indigenous Philippine psychology), as Virgilio Enriquez has formulated it in his Filipino Personality model. Its values enhance shared humanity; empathy and emotional intelligence; shared perception (where the other is always seen as his or her best!); a social connectedness that is based on respecting the sovereignty of others; independence/freedom with responsibility; creativity/ thinking outside of the box; as well as determination that comes from a tacit belief in ones strength and is guided by a sound intuition.

Sadly, in today's Philippine society, this *kapwa* orientation is buried- like fine gold dust in the riverbanks. It may have to be winnowed again from layers and layers of heavy colonial sand. Would it be worth to re-discover the ancestral *kapwa* ways for policy makers, teachers, managers and other leaders?

At a recent symposium for Philippine Schools of Living Traditions, the Talaandig chieftain Migketay Victor Saway said: "*We need to protect, preserve and promote our cultural heritage and identity as a people. We need to develop a sense of identity and cultural values among our children and youth. We need to be culturally accountable to our people and our community*".

Quipped filmmaker Kidlat Tahimik: "*For those commitments, I would vote this tribal chieftain as our next president!*"

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